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ABSTRACT

A study examined the supply of and demand for home economics teacher educators identified through the American Vocational Association's 1993 national directory of the home economics division teacher educators. Demand data were obtained from state supervisors of vocational education (or their designees). Follow-up contacts resulted in a response rate of 55.4% for supply data and a response rate of 51.0% for demand data. Enrollment data provided by the teacher educators indicated a total of 2,168 students enrolled in home economics education programs in 1992-93. The identified majors of the 551 graduates from these programs reported in 1992-93 were as follows: teaching, 367; extension, 7; combination teaching and extension, 34; and other, 143. The number of home economics education graduates in 1993-94 qualified to teach was anticipated to be 440, which meant a decline of 21 in just 1 year. As of 1992-93, 15,235 persons were working as home economics teachers. As of September 1993, an additional 125 teachers were needed to fill open positions, emergency certification was held by 73 persons, a 45 departments would not operate because of a lack of qualified teachers. (Contains 24 references.) (MN)

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A National Supply and Demand Study of Secondary Home Economics Teachers

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There is increasing concern that the supply of undergraduate students majoring in home economics education has sharply declined over the past several decades. From 1968-69 through 1978-79, the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded in home economics education decreased by 42 percent (Harper, 1981). From 1973 to 1983, the decrease was 73 percent (Green, 1987). While 7,002 baccalaureate degrees were awarded in 1968-69, only 2,021 were awarded in 1982-83 (Harper & Davis, 1986). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1993), a meager 426 baccalaureate degrees in home economics education were conferred in 1990-91.

A count of the degrees listed in the 1992-93 Edition of the National Directory of the Home Economics Division of the American Vocational Association (Weis & Pomraning, 1993) shows that 708 baccalaureate degrees were conferred in 1991-92. When adding fifth-year certificates, postbaccalaureate degrees, and M.A.T degrees, there were 757 graduates prepared to teach home economics in 1991-92. Although the recent increase in enrollment is a good sign, we cannot be certain that the downward trend is leveling off or reversing for the long term.

Not only have the numbers of undergraduates declined over time, but the number of institutions offering home economics teacher certification has declined as well. The number of programs decreased from 281 in 1984 to 266 in 1988, and the trend is likely to continue into the 1990's (Hall & Miller, 1989). In a study on the status of home economics teacher education, Kellett and Beard (1991) find that 42.5 percent of baccalaureate programs enroll 10 or fewer students.

The authors of this paper also find alarming statistics revealed in an analysis of the programs listed in the 1992-93 National Directory of the Home Economics Division of the American Vocational Association (Weis & Pomraning, 1993). Out of 228 institutions listed for 1991-92, forty-four granted no baccalaureate or teaching degrees and 10 indicated that the home economics education program had been eliminated--a phenomenal 23.7 percent of programs that produced no future teachers. More than half of the listed institutions (56.6%) certified only between one and five graduates, adding up to a extraordinary 80.3 percent of institutions that produced five or fewer degrees in 1991-92. Less than 20 percent of institutions offering home economics education certified more than five graduates during 1991-92.

Given so few students who have recently earned home economics education degrees, there is a growing concern about filling home economics teaching positions in the future. Hall and Miller (1989) predict a shortage of home economics teachers during the 1990's. Out of an estimated 1, 012, 000 U.S. secondary school teachers in 1991, 3.1 percent (about 13, 370) were home economics teachers. Recent percentages are up from 1986 when only 2.6 percent of all secondary school teachers were home economics teachers. Clearly, the dramatic percentage decline in home economics majors has not been paralleled by declines in home economics teaching positions!

At the same time, current vocational teachers are an experienced group. About 31 percent of vocational teachers have over 20 years of experience, and 42 percent have between 10 and 20 years. Therefore, up to 73 percent of vocational teachers are at mid- or late-career (National Center for Education Statistics, 1993). If home economics teachers reflect the vocational teacher population, Burge and Stewart (1991) are right on target as they warn of a "critical need" for

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potential teachers. They state that this projected shortage "challenges the home economics profession in many states to explore reasons for the decline in teacher education enrollment" (p. 2).

What are the factors which have contributed to dwindling enrollment over the past decades? Several factors--both external and internal to the profession--can be identified. External factors include: an "image problem" starting at the secondary school level where the cooking and sewing image stubbornly survives (Johnson, J.M., Holcombe, M., Kean, R., Woodward, J., Tweeten, B., & Hafer, J., 1987); a national decline in the college age population and large numbers of women entering nontraditional fields (Johnson, 1987); educational and teacher education reforms placing new constraints on home economics education programs (Kellett, 1991); increasing requirements for high school graduation and resulting schedule conflicts (Wendland and Torrie, 1993); devaluation of home economics as a "woman's field" (Thompson, 1988); and a poor image of the home in society (Davis, 1993).

Internal problems also have been identified and could negatively influence enrollment: "failure to adequately reflect social and economic trends" (Burge & Stewart, 1991, p. 7); failure of home economics teachers to ask critical questions (Eyre & Peterat, 1990); lack of critical awareness about sociopolitical conditions that affect families (Brown, 1984); serving the interests of others rather than creating "transformative" knowledge that could improve society (Peterat, 1989); fragmentation within the profession (Davis, 1993, p. 27); and a confusing multiplication of names for home economics units (Davis, 1993).

Given the variety of challenges to the profession, along with a decreasing supply of future teachers, what can be done to attract home economics education majors? As Kellett and Beard (1991) advise, we must attract new entrants into the profession because a teacher shortage could "result in important home economics content being either dropped from the curriculum or absorbed into other subject matter areas that do not focus on the quality of individual and family life" (p. 8). Thus, it is not surprising that a number of suggestions for recruiting have appeared in recent literature.

A study by Burge and Stewart (1991) shows that current leaders in home economics education believe recruitment is necessary to turn the tide of decline, to meet the needs of secondary school students, to provide a diverse multicultural pool of teachers, and to ensure future leadership. Leaders believe that good target audiences for recruitment efforts are: FHA/HERO and 4-H members, community college students, students in related disciplines such as early childhood and psychology, undeclared college freshmen, males and nontraditional students. In addition, Burge and Stewart point out that "the growing proportion of minorities in our society makes recruiting from this group especially critical" (p. 7).

The strategic recruitment plan for home economics at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, which increased enrollment by 117 percent over several years, can serve as an example (Stewart & Daniel, 1989). Faculty implemented a number of small activities that added up to an effective solution to decreased enrollment: a critical evaluation of the program and curriculum changes to meet student needs; designing videotapes and printed materials describing the home economics program; faculty speeches to community civic groups; speeches to high school students; involvement of alumni as referrals for interested students; news releases about successful events in home economics; and personal invitations for visits to interested students.

Young and Johnson (1986) suggest that highlighting the features most attractive to students enables recruitment success: assessment of student interests and skills, promise of financial reward, an admired professional home economist, mothers' opinions, related job experience, and recognition that the human service dimension of home economics is strong and will help them balance their own personal lives. Young and Johnson recommend that recruiting efforts should involve the following: materials that demonstrate home economics in action, involving strong

professionals and employers, informing mothers of students in secondary schools, stressing human benefits of home economics, and work experiences.

In addition to direct recruitment, other suggestions for strengthening the profession might help attract more majors. Collaboration and communication among teacher educators are important in order to share ideas and address common problems in a unified manner. As Davis (1993) warns, "If terms are not consistent and global, professional perceptions are weakened both within and outside the profession" (p. 32). It is important to communicate with home economics teachers about potential teacher shortages--since they are the most important influence on students who choose home economics education careers (Johnson, 1987).

We must focus on communicating the content and benefits of home economics to communities, guidance counselors, administrators, employers, legislators, and students (Johnson, et al., 1987; Love, Engleberg Tucker, & Vaughn, 1986; Stenberg & Elliot, 1990). Because "the general public's perception of home economics appears positive, yet incomplete" (Johnson, et al., p. 75), there remains "a need to educate students and the public about the diverse offerings available in home economics programs" (Wendland & Torrie, 1993, p. 41-42).

Experimentation with new ideas is necessary if "a rebirth within home economics teacher education is desirable to take the profession into the 21st Century" (Southers, 1991, p. 57). For example, the University of Minnesota reconceptualized its program to prepare teachers for "interpretive understanding of everyday life and critical consciousness of ideologies that affect families' abilities to meet their needs and lead interesting lives" (Plihal, 1991, p. 33). We should watch and assess new models.

In summary, literature shows that home economics teacher education faces a decline in its numerical base along with related challenges. Certainly the mission to empower individuals and families is compelling in today's society, but the supply may not meet the demand to carry out the mission in the future. This study is an attempt to more clearly understand the issue of supply and demand. Then, creative vision and sound strategies can be implemented to attract a new generation of professionals.

This study was designed as the beginning of an ongoing data collection process to provide more accurate information for home economics teacher educators and state supervisors on the supply of and demand for home economics teachers nationwide.

The supply data was provided by home economics teacher educators identified by their inclusion in the National Directory of the Home Economics Division of the American Vocational Association (Weis & Pomraning, 1993). All departments/units/schools listed in the directory were sent a copy of the instrument, even if no home economics education graduates were noted for 1992-1993. The demand data was supplied by the state supervisors or their designee with addresses obtained from the national directory.

Two instruments were developed using suggestions from home economics teacher educators across the country and an adaptation of a survey developed by Camp (1993) for similar purposes. The supply data instrument focused on information about graduates entering various occupations, types of majors, numbers of qualified instructors, placement, graduation predictions, and intentions of graduates. Information on program structure, enrollment figures, and faculty members was also gathered. The demand data focused on the number of teachers employed during 1993-94, organization of school, teachers needed but unavailable, and number of teachers expected to leave at the end of the school year, number of emergency certificates, and number of programs that will not operate because of the lack of a teacher. After an initial draft of the instruments was completed, the instruments were circulated to committee members for review. Minor changes were

made to the instruments based on committee member suggestions. The data were collected during the late spring and summer of 1994 for the school year 1993-94.

After a follow-up mailing to home economics teacher educators, a response rate of 55.4 percent was achieved for the supply data. No attempt was made to identify specific units responding to the survey.

Enrollment data provided by the home economics teacher educators indicated a total of 2168 students enrolled in home economics education programs in 1992-93. A specific breakdown by program can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 - 1992-1993 Enrollment in Home Economics Education Programs

Type	Number	Percent
4-year BS/BA with HEED Major	1598	73.7
4-year BS/BA in other major with certification in HEED	369	17.0
Extended BS/BA with major in HEED	67	3.1
5th year graduate program	93	4.3
Other	41	1.9
TOTAL	2168	100.0

There were 551 graduates from home economics education programs reported in 1992-1993. Of that number, 367 had a teaching major, seven an extension major, 34 a combination teaching and extension major, and 143 with other majors. The 1992 -93 graduates were employed in a variety of settings (See Table 2) as reported by home economics teacher educators. The total number of graduates reported by employment differed from the total number of program graduates reported by 15.

Table 2 - Employment of 1992-1993 Home Economics Education Graduates

Employment	Number	Percent
Teaching home economics in state	297	55.4
Teaching home economics out of state	34	6.3
Teaching another subject	28	5.2
Extension	33	6.2
Business	33	6.2
Graduate School	30	5.6
Other employment	38	7.1
Unemployed	13	2.4
Unknown	30	5.6
TOTAL	536	100.0

The types of programs producing home economics education teachers in 1992 - 1993 are reported in Table 3. Over 84 percent of the graduates came from 4 year programs. Of these 461

graduates, 401 (87.0%) indicated that they wanted to find a teaching position while 60 (13.0%) did not want to pursue a teaching career. The number of home economics education graduates in 1993-1994 qualified to teach was anticipated to be 440, a decline of 21 in just one year.

Table 3 - Program Type of 1992-1993 Home Economics Education Graduates

Program Type	Number	Percent
4 year	389	84.3
5 year	27	5.9
Other	45	9.8
TOTAL	461	100.0

Faculty involved with home economics education programs were idetifed by FTE in the survey (See Table 4). Over 69 percent of the FTE were in tenure track positions at the assistant professor level and higher while graduate assistants accounted for about 13 percent.

Table 4 - Home Economics Education Faculty Composition

Rank	FTE	Percent
Assistant/Associate/Full Professor	185.5	69.2
Instructor	24.5	9.1
Graduate Assistants	36.1	13.5
Other	21.8	8.1
TOTAL	267.9	99.9

Follow-up telephone calls to state supervisors or their designee provided a 51.0 percent response rate for the demand data. A list of states not reporting was not compiled.

In 1992-1993, state supervisors reported 15,235 persons working as home economics teachers. As of September 1, 1993, that number was reported to be 15, 598 with an additional 125 teachers needed at that time to fill open positions. In 1993-1994, 157 new positions were reported and a loss of 97 positions. Emergency certification was held by 73 persons and 45 departments would not operate because of the lack of qualified teachers.

Over half of the home economics teachers identified by the state supervisors were classified as working at a high school while almost 25 percent were at the junior high or middle school level (See Table 5). Only 9.8 percent were reported to work in a combined junior/middle/high school. Single teacher departments outnumbered multiple teacher departments by 1165 (16.8%). FHA/HERO responsibilities were part of 7235 home economics teachers positions in this study.

Table 5 - Home Economics Teachers Primary Employment

School Type	Number	Percent
high school	9041	54.1
junior high/middle school	4113	24.6
junior/middle/high school combined	1628	9.8
occupational	1653	9.9
Unknown	262	1.6
TOTAL	16,697	100.0
Single teacher departments	4064	58.4
Multiple teacher departments	2899	41.6
Unknown	1	.0
TOTAL	6964	100.0

The results of this study must be interpreted with caution since there was slightly above a 50 % response rate for both groups. Non-respondents may have very different numbers than those presented.

There are some trends that must be acknowledged. First, it was evident from the responses that there is a declining enrollment in home economics education programs along with a decline in the number of graduates from these programs. There is a great need for qualified home economics teachers as evidenced by the number of emergency certificates granted, the number of departments not operating, and the number of departments that were closed.

There is a need for this type of data to be collected on a yearly basis. It is hoped that with the help of teacher educators and state supervisors this type of research will be continued.

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